

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-15

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-10
L-03 NSAE-00 PA-01 SP-02 SS-15 IO-13 OPR-02 SY-05
SSO-00 MCT-02 AID-05 /080 W
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R 132130Z SEP 78
FM AMEMBASSY MANAGUA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7797
INFO AMEMBASSY GUATEMALA
AMEMBASSY SAN JOSE
AMEMBASSY SAN SALVADOR
AMEMBASSY TEGUCIGALPA
AMEMBASSY PANAMA
AMEMBASSY CARACAS
NSC WASHDC
USSOUTHCOM QUARRY HTS, CANAL ZONE
AMEMBASSY MEXICO
USICA WASHDC

C O N F I D E N T I A L MANAGUA 4322

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINS, PINT, SHUM, PGOV, GW, NU, CS
SUBJECT: FOREIGN MINISTER MEETS WITH DIPLOMATIC CORPS

REF: MANAGUA 4288

1. FONMIN QUINTANA CALLED CHIEFS OF MISSION AND NUNCIO TO
FOREIGN MINISTRY SEPT 12 TO BRIEF THEM ON THE CURRENT
SITUATION AND TO GIVE THEM ASSURANCES OF THEIR SAFETY. DURING
THE PERIOD BEFORE QUINTANA ARRIVED, THE AMBASSAODRS APPEARED
TO BE RELAXED AND THERE WERE THE NORMAL JOKES AND ABRAZOS.
THE GERMAN AMBASSADOR SAID THAT THE SANDINISTA ATTACK ON THE
GN GUARD POST NEAR HIS RESIDENCE ON CARRETERA SUR HAD BEGUN
BEFORE HE GOT HOME AND CONSEQUENTLY HE HAD TO WAIT FOR ABOUT
THREE HOURS BEFORE BEING ABLE TO GET THROUGH.

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2. QUINTANA BEGAN THE MEETING BY DISCUSSING THE
SITUATION IN THE COUNTRY ALONG THE SAME LINES AS DID THE
PRESIDENT DURING HIS PRESS CONFERENCE SAME DAY(MANAGUA
4288.) HE ADDED THAT THE GN WAS NOT NUMEROUS ENOUGH TO
PATROL EVERY STREET CORNER IN CHINANDEGA AND LEON, AND
THAT CONSEQUENTLY SOME HOUSES WERE BURNED AND SNIPING

OCCURRED DURING THE NIGHT. BY THAT MORNING, HOWEVER, BOTH CITIES WERE QUIET. (NOTE: DISTURBANCES HAVE RETURNED TO LEON AND SITUATION IN CHINANDEGA IS NOT UNDER CONTROL. END NOTE).

3. QUINTANA SAID THAT IT WAS CLEAR THAT THE INSURGENCY HAD BEEN PLANNED AND DIRECTED BY UNIDENTIFIED ELEMENTS FROM OUTSIDE NICARAGUA. HE STRESSED, HOWEVER, THAT IN NO WAY SHOULD ONE CONSIDER THE CURRENT FIGHTING AS A CIVIL UPRISING. THE FAMILY MAN, THE MAN ON THE STREET, THE WORKERS, AND THE CAMPESINOS WERE NOT INVOLVED TO ANY NOTICEABLE EXTENT AND THE FIGHTING ALMOST IN ITS ENTIRETY WAS BEING CARRIED OUT BY YOUNG MEN WHO HAD RECEIVED VARYING DEGREES OF TRAINING FROM THESE OUTSIDE ELEMENTS. HE STRESSED THAT THE GUARDIA NACIONAL WAS CAPABLE OF MAINTAINING CALM IN THE COUNTRY BUT THAT IT WAS DIFFICULT TO IMPOSSIBLE FOR THEM TO STOP SUDDEN NIGHTTIME TERRORIST ATTACKS. HE ASSURED THE AMBASSADORS, HOWEVER, THAT EVERYTHING WOULD BE DONE TO ASSURE THAT THEY AND THE MEMBERS OF THEIR STAFFS WOULD BE ADEQUATELY PROTECTED.

4. QUINTANA SAID THAT HE HAD RECEIVED WORD FROM AMB. SEVILLA SACASA IN WASHINGTON THAT THE OAS MEETING SCHEDULED FOR TUESDAY TO DISCUSS THE NICARAGUAN SITUATION HAD BEEN POSTPONED A SECOND TIME. THIS INDICATED TO HIM, HE SAID, THAT MOST OAS MEMBERS WERE NOT AS CONCERNED ABOUT THE SITUATION IN NICARAGUA AS THEY MAY HAVE BEEN

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EARLIER. THIS IS CORRECT, HE SAID, BECAUSE THE LEGITIMATE CONSTITUTIONAL AUTHORITIES OF NICARAGUA ARE ABLE TO MANAGE CURRENT AND ANY FUTURE INTERNAL NICARAGUAN PROBLEMS. HE SAID THAT PRESIDENT SOMOZA'S DOORS WERE WIDE OPEN FOR DISCUSSIONS WITH THE DOMESTIC POLITICAL OPPOSITION, AND NEEDED SUCH DISCUSSIONS HAD BEEN TAKING PLACE. HE SAID THAT THE PRESIDENT WAS WILLING TO MAKE "CONCESSIONS," BUT DID NOT STATE WHAT THESE CONCESSIONS MIGHT BE.

5. DURING THE QUESTION PERIOD THAT FOLLOWED QUINTANA'S STATEMENT, THE COSTA RICAN AMBASSADOR WAS CALLED TO THE PHONE. HE RETURNED TO ANNOUNCE THAT HE HAD JUST RECEIVED WORD FROM SAN JOSE THAT NICARAGUAN TROOPS HAD CROSSED THE BORDER INTO COSTA RICA. QUINTANA TURNED TO VICE FOREIGN MINISTER BODAN WHO STATED THAT NICARAGUA HAD BEEN ATTACKED BY SANDINISTA FORCES FROM COSTA RICAN TERRITORY AND ESTIMATED THE NUMBER TO BE ABOUT 50. BODAN SAID THAT THEY HAD OCCUPIED THE TOWN OF SAPOA (APPROXIMATELY SEVEN MILES NORTH OF THE BORDER WITH COSTA RICA) FOR ABOUT 1-1/2 HOURS. HE SAID THAT THE GN FORCES WERE CURRENTLY DRIVING THE ATTACKERS BACK TO COSTA RICAN BORDER. BODAN SAID THAT THE SANDINISTAS HAD BEEN TRAINING AT A FINCA, LA

LIBERTAD, OWNED BY MRS. PASTORA HOLMAN.

6. THE FEW AMBASSADORS THAT MADE COMMENTS AT QUINTANA'S REQUEST WERE LARGELY CONCERNED WITH PROBLEMS THEIR STAFFS HAVE HAD IN PICKING UP MAIL AND SENDING CABLES FROM THE MAIN COMMUNICATIONS BUILDING IN DOWNTOWN MANAGUA. SOME OF THE AMBASSADORS COMPLAINED THAT THEIR OFFICIAL GN GUARDS WERE CHANGED TOO OFTEN. THE GERMAN AMBASSADOR NOTED THAT DURING THE ATTACK ON CARRETERA SUR HIS GUARDS HAD LEFT THEIR POSTS TO RETURN TO THEIR UNITS. ANOTHER AMBASSADOR COMPLAINED THAT GN TROOPS DID NOT UNDERSTAND WHAT CD PLATES MEANT AND CONSEQUENTLY HE WAS STOPPED AT CHECKPOINTS AND ORDERED TO OPEN HIS TRUNK. QUINTANA PROMISED TO LOOK INTO THESE MATTERS. SOME LEVITY WAS
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INTRODUCED BY THE JAPANESE CHARGE. HIS SPANISH IS VERY POOR AND CONSEQUENTLY HE BROUGHT ALONG A TAPE RECORDER WHICH SCREECHED AND SQUAWKED FROM TIME TO TIME THROUGHOUT THE MEETING.
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